

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 027

CG 014 260

AUTHOR Martin, Don; And Others
TITLE Experiential Team Building for Student Leaders in Union Activities and Residence Halls.

NOTE 9p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *College Students; Higher Education; *Leadership Training; Resident Assistants; Student Development; *Student Leadership; Student Organizations; *Team Training; *Training Methods; *Youth Leaders

ABSTRACT

This guide offers college or university student union and housing office personnel assistance in developing experiential team building workshops for student leaders. The rationale for providing such training is discussed in terms of the following: (1) resident assistants are usually vital campus leaders, with the potential to be vital student union leaders; (2) student union leaders are usually vital campus leaders, with the potential to become residence hall leaders; and (3) workshop settings provide an opportunity to bridge gaps that may exist between student service areas and utilize available departmental expertise. Using the group task directive "to have a successful campout," the workshop components are described, i.e., team formation and procedures, goal planning and task clarification, evaluation procedures, personal feelings assessment, and feedback mechanisms. This workshop can also be used or adapted for "hands on" student leadership training in other educational, business, or interpersonal settings.
 (Author/BMW)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED188027

CG 014260

EXPERIENTIAL TEAM BUILDING
FOR STUDENT LEADERS IN UNION ACTIVITIES & RESIDENCE HALLS

by

DON MARTIN
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education
North Texas State University

and

CYNTHIA CHERREY
Organizational Development Director, Union
North Texas State University

and

BARBARA GAWINSKI
Field Director
Cross Timbers Girl Scout Council

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Don Martin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EXPERIENTIAL TEAM BUILDING
FOR STUDENT LEADERS IN UNION ACTIVITIES & RESIDENCE HALLS

During this past year at North Texas State University, we have been exploring leadership development through joint efforts by the Union and Housing offices. This attempt was made for several reasons:

1. resident assistants are vital leaders to the campus and are active or potentially active in Union leadership. Also, the reverse is true in that student Union programmers often become involved in residential life leadership.
2. it provides an opportunity to bridge the gap that may exist between different student service areas.
3. to utilize the expertise available in different departments.

Leadership involves group interaction. Student leaders are confronted by a dual task of establishing methods to attain goals and examining ways to improve and solidify their group.

In organizations, tasks are accomplished by smaller groups or committees. For example, student Union programmers are divided into individual interest committees such as film, fine arts, etc. Housing, in a similar manner, utilizes resident assistants in various organizational tasks in each residence hall. Yet, in both cases, the students are working for the same common purpose and goals. The development and use of competent people are a vital asset to an effective team.

In our leadership training model, we have found team building or team development to be an effective tool for increasing organizational effectiveness. For an effective group experience, members (1) need acceptance and expression of feelings through open communication and (2) group members need to be highly motivated, interdependent, open to change and new experience.

Our team building workshops stress experiential learning for assimilating, processing and utilizing leadership skills. This ties into what we consider the essence of creativity. We are concerned with placing people in situations where they can draw upon creative instincts to resolve challenges occurring in conflict circumstances. This creative situational atmosphere is an integral part of our team building workshop.

Many times members involved in a training workshop focus on one aspect of leadership development. The leadership program this past year at North Texas developed from a series of interrelated workshops in goal setting, leadership styles, communication, motivation and problem solving. The experiential team building workshop provides an opportunity to integrate these aspects of leadership training into a conceptual and practical whole. It allows students to actually see and experience the process of leadership.

Workshop Format

Selection of students attending the team building workshop was based on involvement in past workshops offered in the area of goal setting, communication, motivation and problem solving. The twenty participants included student associations's officers, Union committee members, resident assistants, etc.

The learning atmosphere was an outdoor experiential camping trip. The workshop site was a camp consisting of one central building surrounded by five acres of undeveloped land used for the campsites. The twenty participants were divided into groups of four to constitute their "team". The approximate time of the workshop was five hours. The goals of the workshop were:

1. To use effective communication skills--listening to others

and considering their ideas in an appropriate context. This included sending messages that are clearly interpreted.

2. Being open minded, aware of the experience, and actively participating.
3. Being cognizant of role application.
4. To experience group dynamics and develop the realization that organizations consist of separate teams working on individual tasks for the common goal of the organization.

The teams of four were formed upon arrival at the camp's main building. They were instructed to acquaint themselves with someone they did not know well. After conversing for five minutes each dyad joined another dyad to form their team. All five groups were then given a set of directions to their individual campsites. Included was the goal statement, "to have a successful campout", and the tasks needed to accomplish that goal: (1) reaching the designated site, (2) setting up the tent, and (3) preparing the meal. The teams were responsible for preparing different dishes with essential items denied (i.e. can opener, stirring spoon, knife, etc.). The missing essential articles placed each group in a mild crisis situation. Due to the situational crises, some form of leadership had to emerge in each group. Brainstorming was an often used technique in each of the groups as was creativity in confronting the challenges they faced. For example, a group with the task of preparing bread did not have the proper fire and instead made biscuits. One group without stakes for their tent had to creatively devise a method for building shelter.

Each group during this process came to the realization that they needed the assistance of the other groups to reach the desired goals. Communication networks were established between each of the groups. The individual teams decided as a total group when to reconvene at the

main building to share their accomplishments.

After the meal, the students assessed their team accomplishments in their individual groups. A group process assessment form was given to each student and consisted of the following points to assist in clarifying the experience they had just accomplished:

1. Team formation and role differentiation
2. Team procedures
3. Goal planning and task clarification
4. Obstructions and assistants to goal achievement
5. Group effectiveness and evaluation procedures
6. Overall feelings and comments of team building.

The differences and commonalities among the groups and their individual members were processed the final hour of the workshop as one cohesive unit. Task accomplishment in relation to goal attainment was the major focal point of the group discussion.

The major relationships discovered by the group members in this facilitative process included:

1. Leadership styles may vary and yet still achieve desired goals.
2. Individual accomplishments need to be recognized and reinforced in order to increase personal involvement and responsibility.
3. Situational creativity and utilization of individual strengths are vital components of team building.
4. Open communication with sharing of ideas, common problems and collective observations help stimulate leadership development.
5. Each individual needs to be utilized in a challenging and creative manner to develop their leadership potential into useful skills.

Summary & Observations

Experiential team building is an effective tool for integrating various components of leadership development into a practical and conceptual unit. These integrated aspects of team building utilized in our workshops include communication, conflict resolution, creative problem solving, goal setting, motivation and role awareness.

Team building provides an opportunity to explore the process of leadership from when the mutual goal is established, to the integration of the human relationships and tasks involved and to the final goal attainment.

In order to attain maximum effectiveness from an experiential team building workshop, certain prerequisites are needed including:

1. Students with exposure to past workshops in various leadership development areas including communication, goal setting and various group processes are a sound basis for assimilating the workshop experience.
2. Maximum effectiveness from this workshop is normally gained by students presently involved in campus leadership positions.
3. Students must have the motivation and desire to explore new alternatives while being committed to an intensive all-day workshop.
4. The workshop facilitators must be knowledgeable of group processes and ensuing role conflicts, be able to stimulate creativity in trying situations, and be capable of integrating specific leadership experiences into a global and holistic leadership approach.

The benefit of an experiential team building workshop is the exposure to "hands on" leadership experiences. It is a tool for

integrating leadership theory into useful skills and a practical training exercise that directly relates to the needs of student leaders and their campus organizations.

Summary and Conclusions

Often leadership development trainers are in a dilemma as to how to effectively utilize students in coordinating and facilitating leadership workshops. The NTLT program enables "proven" effective leaders to develop our leadership program. The benefits gained from this unique opportunity include:

1. Students become knowledgeable of the process involved in developing a leadership workshop.
2. They gain valuable experience in designing a series of learning experiences that lead to the accomplishment of the objectives for the workshop.
3. As trainers, this process enables us to grow and gain valuable student input.

In conclusion, we feel the leadership process at NTSU can credit much of its success to the student involvement in developing the North Texas Leadership Training program.